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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 11, 2008
Docket #: 2:07-CR-00397-FCD

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RING LEADER IN BUTTE COUNTY IDENTITY THEFT CONSPIRACY GETS OVER FIVE-YEAR SENTENCE FOR BANK FRAUD, POSSESSION OF STOLEN U.S. MAIL, AND AGGRAVATED IDENTITY THEFT

SACRAMENTO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that JODI LYNN GARCIA, 32, of Paradise, was sentenced this morning to 65 months in federal custody by United States District Judge Frank C. Damrell, Jr.

This case is the product of a combined investigation by the Butte County Sheriff's Department, Chico Police Department, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and other law enforcement agencies including state and local authorities in Glenn, Tehama, and Plumas Counties.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who is prosecuting the case, from November 2006 through June 2007, GARCIA approached various associates and requested that they cash forged checks stolen from the United States Mail and counterfeit checks manufactured with the associates' names, using account numbers obtained from stolen financial information. Garcia herself cashed checks manufactured with stolen account information, using several phony California driver's licenses. The conspirators caused losses of between \$30,000 and \$70,000 to victim banks and financial institutions. From November 2006 through July 2007, over 50 different persons were victims of theft of identity or financial information.

GARCIA recruited the following:

- HEATHER ANNE MORSHEAD, 25, of Magalia, California to create phoney checks. On November 26, 2007, MORSHEAD pleaded guilty to conspiracy and bank fraud charges. Her sentencing hearing is scheduled for March 3, 2008.
- HEATHER MICHELLE WILSON, 34, of Chico, California, who pleaded guilty on September 24, 2007 to five counts of bank fraud, a single count of possession of stolen U.S. Mail, and a single count of conspiracy
- TIFFANY ANN SABRAL, 27, of Chico, who pleaded guilty on August 27, 2007, to two counts of bank fraud and a single count of conspiracy—received a sentence of time served plus 36 months probation.
- TANYA LESLIE WELLMAN, 37, of Durham, California, who pleaded guilty on September 14, 2007, to four counts of bank fraud and a single count of conspiracy—received a sentence of time served plus 36 months probation.
- MELISSA ANN MEIER, 19, of Chico, is facing charges as a co-conspirator and is additionally charged with aggravated identity theft, bank fraud, and possession of stolen U.S. Mail. The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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